

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 5,781,898 to Fukatsu et al. in view of United States Patent No. 5,940,842 to Sakuta. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the features of the present invention are not disclosed or suggested in the cited references. In particular, neither the Fukatsu et al. reference nor the Sakuta reference, alone or in combination, discloses or suggests the claimed search system in which a plurality of search conditions are combined by logical operators to create a plurality of search condition combinations, but where each of these search condition combinations is not combined with any of the other search condition combinations by a logical operator, and further where each of the search results is output as a separate search result which can be compared, by the user, with another search result.

The Examiner appears to consider the data in each row of the table stored in the condition storage section 10 shown in Figure 2 of the Fukatsu et al. reference as the combination of the search conditions of the present invention (i.e., the combination of unit condition formula 10a, logical symbol type 10b, and priority order 10c), and he also appears to consider the entire table as a plurality of search condition combinations.

However, in the table of the condition storage section 10, the unit condition formula 10a (keyword, etc.) of each row is combined with the unit condition formula 10a of an immediately preceding row by a logic symbol designated in 10b, and therefore the entire

table represents a single search condition of one search process (col. 6, lines 24-40). Thus, the device of Fukatsu et al. fails to include, inter alia, the feature of independent Claims 1, 5, and 11-16 “wherein each of the search condition combinations is not combined with any other of the search condition combinations by a logical operator, and [further] wherein each of the search results is output as a search result which is compared with another of the search results by the user.” Similarly, the device of Fukatsu et al. also fails to include, inter alia, the feature of independent Claims 17 and 18 “wherein respective search condition elements are combined by logical operators in each of the queries, wherein each of the queries is not combined with any other of the queries by a logical operator, and [further] wherein each of the search results is output as a search result which is compared with another of the search results by a user.”

In contrast to the system of the Fukatsu et al. reference, in the system of the present invention, since a certain combination of search conditions is not combined with another combination of search conditions by a logic symbol, each combination of search conditions is independent of the other search condition combinations.

Moreover, the search result designated by the search condition in each row of Fukatsu et al. is a so-called intermediate result, but it is not the final search result desired by the operator. Therefore, comparison of these intermediate results is not contemplated in the Fukatsu et al. reference. However, in the system of the present invention, since a user compares a plurality of search results obtained by each of the plurality of search condition

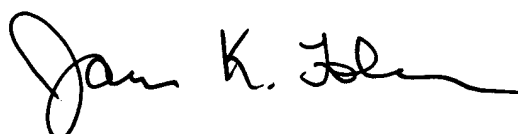
combinations, these search condition combinations are collectively designated as a search result corresponding to each combination of search conditions that has been inputted.

Finally, the Sakuta reference fails to remedy the deficiencies discussed above. Instead, the Sakuta reference merely relates to providing expanded information relating to the location of a keyword that has been searched. Thus, for all of the reasons discussed above, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of this §103 rejection of Claims 1-18.

For all of the above reasons, Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. Should the Examiner be of the opinion that a telephone conference would aid in the prosecution of the application, or that outstanding issues exist, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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